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Article

Transforming Lives: U-Rock's Restorative Pedagogy with Youth in Conflict with the Law

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Abstract

Community extension programs in higher education often remain limited to service or livelihood training, leaving their pedagogical potential underexplored. This study, conducted in Academic Year 2024–2025 at St. Michael's College of Iligan, Inc., investigates U-Rock, a restorative community extension initiative designed in partnership with Bahay Pag-asa to reframe extension program as education. Anchored in Critical Pedagogy, Restorative Education, Psychosocial Wellness Theories, and Interdisciplinary Pedagogy, the program integrates literacy, catechism, and wellness activities into structured learning experiences for the youth in conflict with the Law. Addressing existing gaps, the study engages juvenile offenders within HEI extension program, develops an interdisciplinary model that combines literacy, catechism, and wellness support, and reframes extension from service into pedagogy. Using a multi-method qualitative approach that integrates case study, narrative inquiry, and ethnographic observation, the research involved thirty participants including students, faculty, Bahay Pag-asa personnel, parents, and youth residents. Findings reveal that U-Rock empowers youth through literacy, moral reflection, and psychosocial resilience while simultaneously transforming SMCII students through empathy, civic responsibility, and applied learning. Ten salient themes emerged, highlighting Extension as Pedagogy, Operationalizing CHED Mandates, Literacy as Empowerment, Values Formation and Moral Reflection, Psychosocial Resilience, Interdisciplinary Collaboration, Student Transformation, Institutional Partnership and Mission Alignment, Distinction from Conventional Models, and Contribution to Global Curriculum Discourse. Collectively, these insights demonstrate that community extension program can function as restorative pedagogy, advancing community rehabilitation and institutional mission, while offering a replicable model for higher education institutions to innovate curriculum and respond to the needs of significant youth in the periphery.

Keywords: critical pedagogy; interdisciplinary praxis; psychosocial wellness; restorative pedagogy; U-Rock; youth empowerment

I. Introduction

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines are mandated to extend their expertise to communities, a responsibility sharpened by CHED memoranda that call for outcomes-based programs in literacy, wellness, and holistic development (Commission on Higher Education, CMO no. 93, s. 2026). As Llenares and Deocaris (2018) emphasize, such directives situate community extension as pedagogy in action, requiring institutions to design interventions that are both measurable and transformative. Here, the urgency of this mandate is underscored by the plight of youth in conflict with the law, who remain excluded from mainstream education and stigmatized by corrective systems, a challenge highlighted in comparative rehabilitation studies (Maxim & Whitehead, 2017). Bahay Pag-asa of Barangay Santiago in Iligan City, Philippines, provides a rehabilitative setting, but its effectiveness depends on sustained collaboration with the community, local government, and academic institutions. Responding to this need, St. Michael's College of Iligan, Inc., through its College of Arts and Sciences, launched the U-Rock initiative, locally known as

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Tambayayong sa Kabataan, mobilizing students from English Language, Philosophy, and Psychology to deliver literacy sessions, catechism, and wellness activities.

At the same time, this study intends to address several gaps in existing work by showing how education, pedagogy, and curriculum can serve as restorative pathways. Previous research has rarely examined how a single rehabilitative setting can sustain extension programs over time (Salazar, 2020; Narine, Ali, & Hill, 2021), nor has it tracked the long-term impact of restorative pedagogy on reintegration (Maxim & Whitehead, 2017). Dimensions such as family involvement, digital literacy, and livelihood support remain underexplored in relation to curriculum design (Fernandes, 2023; Commission on Higher Education, 2026). Moreover, values formation or catechism for youth in conflict with the law has been studied primarily in moral or spiritual terms (Aguilar, 2016), but less in connection with structured academic programs. By integrating literacy, catechism, and psychosocial wellness into a coherent curriculum, and aligning these with CHED and LGU frameworks, this study highlights how higher education can operationalize restorative pedagogy in ways that strengthen institutional mandates and community transformation.

By contextual definition, the U-Rock Program of St. Michael's College of Iligan, Inc. (SMCII) stands for *"You"* in the "U" of U-Rock program and "R-O-C-K" as *Responsibility, Opportunity, Christ, and Knowledge*. It embodies the institution's commitment to restorative pedagogy by activating students from English Language, Philosophy, and Psychology to extend literacy, catechism, and psychosocial wellness to youth in conflict with the law. By definition, "You" emphasizes the personal agency of each learner and participant, while "ROCK" anchors the program in values that cultivate responsibility, open opportunities, and deepen knowledge of Christ as a foundation for transformation.

This orientation draws inspiration from Scripture, particularly Matthew 16:18, where Christ declares: *"You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it."* This biblical grounding affirms that education, pedagogy, and curriculum, when rooted in Christ, can withstand challenges and serve as a firm foundation for reintegration and resilience.

The program embodies the college's mission as guided by the RVM congregation's Quality Transformative Ignacian Marian Education (QTIME) framework (University of the Immaculate Conception. (n.d.), made even more significant by PAASCU accreditation, ISO quality assurance, and UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals (St. Michael's College of Iligan, Inc. (n.d.). Research on RVM pedagogy affirms its formative influence on values and practice (Napiere & Chavez, 2019; Candilas et al., 2023), while broader scholarship situates such efforts within UNESCO's SDG-4 on quality education and Paulo Freire's legacy of critical pedagogy for intercultural communication (Corbett & Guilherme, 2021). Beyond community impact, the initiative also strengthens student formation, as volunteerism fosters resilience and gratitude (Llenares, Sario, Bialba, & Dela Cruz, 2020). In parallel, Eslit (2026) underscores how lived memory and digital ethnography in post-disaster contexts reveal education's role in resilience and recovery, insights that resonate with U-Rock's restorative orientation and its commitment to dignity, healing, and transformation.

From this institutional commitment arises the central objective of the present study: to examine U-Rock as a restorative pedagogical model for engaging youth in conflict with the law. To achieve this, the research is guided by five qualitative questions, each situated in the local context of SMCII:

1. How does SMCII, through its College of Arts and Sciences, operationalize CHED's mandate for community extension in partnership with Bahay Pag-asa in Barangay Santiago, Iligan City?
2. What literacy, catechism, and wellness strategies are specifically implemented by U Rock under the leadership of BA English Language, Philosophy, and Psychology programs?
3. In what ways does interdisciplinary collaboration among SMCII faculty and students shape the design and delivery of U Rock's activities?
4. How do youth participants at Bahay Pag-asa perceive the impact of U Rock on their literacy development, values formation, and psychosocial resilience?
5. How does U Rock contribute to SMCII's curricular innovation and institutional mission, particularly within the framework of restorative pedagogy and the QTIME–SDG alignment?

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The significance of this study lies in its focus on a population often overlooked in educational research. By documenting U-Rock's practices, the study demonstrates how pedagogy can serve as rehabilitation, how community extension can become restorative, and how SMCII can embody its social mandate. For the institution, this initiative affirms its stand that education must extend beyond the classroom, addressing community needs while forming students in values of service, empathy, and justice. This research advances the thesis that U-Rock exemplifies restorative pedagogy by integrating literacy, catechism, and wellness into community extension, thereby transforming the lives of youth in conflict with the law while strengthening SMCII's mission of holistic education and social responsibility.

II. Review of Related Literature

Community extension has long been recognized as one of the defining responsibilities of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines, yet scholarship notes that its practice has often been confined to conventional models such as charity work, livelihood projects, and skills training. While these approaches provide immediate relief or practical competencies, they remain service-oriented and detached from the pedagogical core of higher education. The literature therefore challenges HEIs to reimagine extension not as peripheral outreach but as a structured educational practice that integrates instruction, research, and social responsibility. This reorientation positions extension as pedagogy in action, a shift that transforms community engagement into a site of teaching and learning.

Policy frameworks reinforce this shift. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED), through its memoranda on community extension, emphasizes outcomes-based initiatives that prioritize literacy, psychosocial wellness, and holistic development. Literacy is framed as a foundational skill enabling social reintegration and empowerment, particularly for marginalized groups such as youth in conflict with the law. Embedding literacy and wellness into extension programs thus becomes a pedagogical imperative, ensuring that engagement is not reduced to service delivery but contributes to curricular innovation. In parallel, institutions like St. Michael's College of Iligan, Inc. (SMCII) operate within guiding frameworks that shape curriculum and pedagogy. The Religious of the Virgin Mary's QTIME framework underscores quality, transformation, innovation, mission, and excellence, while PAASCU accreditation and ISO certification provide rigorous benchmarks of quality assurance. Alignment with UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals situates these initiatives within global discourses on education, equity, and social justice. Together, these frameworks compel HEIs to design extension programs that are both compliant and transformative, embedding values of service, empathy, and justice into their curriculum.

Scholarship deepens the institutional mandate for community extension by situating it within restorative and critical pedagogical traditions. Restorative pedagogy emphasizes education that empowers rather than punishes, foregrounding rehabilitation and reintegration as central goals for youth in conflict with the law. Carter (2013) underscores how restorative practices, both formal and informal, rebuild identity and foster resilience, aligning with Freire's critical pedagogy that emphasizes dialogue and conscientization as pathways to transformation. Studies on juvenile rehabilitation affirm that literacy, values formation, and psychosocial support are indispensable to breaking cycles of exclusion, underscoring education's role in reintegration (Maxim & Whitehead, 2017). This theoretical grounding positions restorative pedagogy as a framework that not only addresses marginalization but also advances social justice through education.

Interdisciplinary pedagogy further extends this discourse by demonstrating how collaboration across disciplines enriches program design and delivery. Slothuus, Ashby, and Duxbury (2025) argue that interdisciplinarity in theory and practice enables holistic approaches to teaching and learning, while Kotyk, Romanyuk, and Kisil (2022) highlight its capacity to integrate diverse perspectives into coherent educational strategies. Such insights resonate with extension programs that mobilize multiple fields—language, philosophy, psychology—to ensure that interventions are comprehensive rather than fragmented. Abenir, Abelardo, and Moreno (2020) add that empowering extension

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workers through structured training enhances their ability to engage communities effectively, bridging academic expertise with grassroots realities. Together, these studies affirm that interdisciplinarity is not simply a methodological choice but a pedagogical necessity for transformative extension.

Within this landscape, community extension programs emerge as vital spaces where pedagogy intersects with social responsibility. They provide HEIs with opportunities to enact their mission beyond the classroom, addressing real community needs while simultaneously forming students in civic responsibility. For St. Michael's College of Iligan, Inc. (SMCII), the U Rock initiative—conceived as *Tambayayong sa Kabataan*—represents precisely this intersection. Mobilizing students from English Language, Philosophy, and Psychology, U Rock delivers literacy, catechism, and wellness activities to youth at Bahay Pag-asa. The college frames U Rock not as charity but as an embodiment of its mission, a concrete expression of its responsibility to transform lives through education. In this way, U Rock exemplifies how restorative pedagogy, critical dialogue, and interdisciplinary collaboration converge to make extension a living curriculum that advances both social justice and student formation.

Despite these advances, the literature reveals persistent gaps. Few studies have examined juvenile offenders within the context of HEI extension, leaving a critical population underexplored. There is also limited documentation of interdisciplinary models that combine literacy, values formation, and psychosocial support in a single framework. Moreover, extension has too often been framed as service rather than pedagogy, constraining its potential to contribute to curricular innovation. It is precisely these gaps that U-Rock seeks to address. By integrating literacy, catechism, and wellness into a single program, and by mobilizing students across disciplines, U Rock demonstrates how extension can be reframed as pedagogy. Its restorative orientation situates education as rehabilitation, offering youth in conflict with the law a pathway to reintegration while providing students with experiential learning grounded in empathy and justice.

Interdisciplinary scholarship reinforces the significance of this approach. DeZure (2010) emphasizes that interdisciplinary pedagogies in higher education cultivate integrative thinking and problem-solving, while Friedow, Blankenship, Green, and Stroup (2012) highlight how learning across disciplines fosters adaptability and deeper engagement with complex social issues. Luckie and Newell (2019) further argue that interdisciplinary habits of mind, such as synthesis, reflexivity, and collaboration, are essential for preparing students to navigate diverse contexts. Applied to community extension, these insights underscore the value of combining literacy, values formation, and psychosocial support into a coherent framework that addresses both community needs and student formation. U Rock's design exemplifies this synthesis, showing how interdisciplinary pedagogy can move beyond fragmented service models toward holistic, transformative engagement.

Overall, the reviewed literature establishes the conventional models of community extension program, the mandates of CHED, the guiding frameworks of SMCII, and the scholarship on restorative and interdisciplinary pedagogy. It also identifies the gaps in existing research and practice, particularly the absence of sustained interdisciplinary approaches and the neglect of marginalized youth in extension discourse. This positions U Rock as a direct response to those gaps, offering an interdisciplinary, restorative model of extension that reframes pedagogy as social responsibility. By situating U-Rock within these discourses, the study contributes to the broader conversation on how HEIs in the Philippines can innovate curriculum and pedagogy to meet the needs of marginalized communities, while simultaneously advancing student formation and institutional mission.

III. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study rests on the convergence of several traditions in pedagogy and social science, each offering a lens through which U-Rock's restorative extension can be understood. By weaving together critical pedagogy, restorative education, psychosocial wellness

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theories, and interdisciplinary praxis, the framework situates U-Rock as both a curricular innovation and a social responsibility of St. Michael's College of Iligan, Inc.

To begin, Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) provides the foundation for understanding literacy not merely as a technical skill but as a means of empowerment and conscientization. Freire argued that education must awaken critical consciousness, enabling learners to read both the word and the world. In the context of Bahay Pag asa, literacy sessions conducted by U-Rock activities become more than exercises in reading and writing; they are opportunities for youth in conflict with the law to reclaim agency, articulate their experiences, and participate in dialogue that challenges structures of marginalization.

Building on this, restorative education emphasizes values formation, reconciliation, and reintegration. Unlike punitive models that isolate offenders, restorative approaches seek to rebuild relationships and restore dignity. Hopkins (2015) explains that restorative theory in practice works precisely because it fosters reconciliation and community healing. Within U-Rock, catechism and values formation activities embody this orientation, fostering reconciliation with self, community, and faith. The program thus positions pedagogy as a pathway to reintegration, affirming that education can heal ruptures and restore futures.

Equally important are psychosocial wellness theories, which highlight resilience, identity formation, and group dynamics as central to rehabilitation. Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Rogers' humanistic psychology are complemented by Ahearn (2000), who shows how psychosocial wellness interventions strengthen self-concept and provide supportive peer environments. U Rock's wellness activities, facilitated by Psychology faculty and students, respond to this need by creating spaces where participants can process trauma, build resilience, and develop healthier identities. These activities complement literacy and values formation, ensuring that pedagogy addresses both cognitive and emotional dimensions of learning.

Restorative education and interdisciplinary pedagogy both emerged as responses to the limits of traditional schooling, but they developed in distinct contexts that later converged in practice. Restorative education traces its roots to the 1974 victim–offender reconciliation program in Kitchener, Ontario, which laid the foundation for restorative justice. By 1989, New Zealand pioneered its integration into schools, shifting discipline from punitive measures to reconciliation and reintegration, and by the 1990s–2000s it was embedded in teacher training and school policies worldwide. Interdisciplinary pedagogy, on the other hand, has roots in 19th century European universities, but gained traction in the 1970s as higher education sought to address complex social and cultural challenges. Braßler (2020) demonstrates that interdisciplinary teaching enriches learning by integrating diverse perspectives, while empirical results affirm its capacity to foster adaptability and innovation. Together, these theories highlight education's capacity to repair social relationships while integrating diverse disciplines to address multifaceted human needs.

Furthermore, the interdisciplinary character of U-Rock is itself a theoretical stance. By bringing together AB English Language, Philosophy, and Psychology students in one extension program, the initiative embodies an interdisciplinary pedagogy that integrates language, ethics, and psychosocial support. This praxis (practical application) demonstrates that no single discipline can adequately address the complex needs of youth in conflict with the law. Instead, collaboration across fields creates a holistic model of restorative extension, where literacy empowers, philosophy guides values, and psychology nurtures resilience.

With all this, the four theories provide the intellectual scaffolding for the present study. Critical pedagogy frames literacy as empowerment and conscientization, restorative education situates values formation within reconciliation and reintegration, psychosocial wellness theories underscore resilience, identity, and group dynamics, while interdisciplinary pedagogy demonstrates the necessity of collaboration across fields. U-Rock exemplifies this convergence by integrating literacy, catechism, and wellness into a single extension program, transforming outreach from service into pedagogy. In doing so, it advances SMCII's mission of holistic education and social responsibility,

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while offering a model of restorative extension responsive to the unique needs of youth in conflict with the law.

IV. Methodology

This study employed a multi method qualitative design to capture the layered realities of U-Rock, integrating case study, narrative inquiry, and ethnographic observation. Numbers alone cannot reflect the agency of youth participants or the interplay of mandates, narratives, and community dynamics; hence qualitative approaches were prioritized. Ethical guidelines were strictly observed, with pseudonyms and coded references used to protect privacy, informed consent obtained from faculty, students, parents, and personnel, and assent procedures followed for youth participants under custodial care at Bahay Pag asa.

The design draws on Shkedi's (2005) multiple case narrative, which integrates diverse stories into a coherent framework, and Sonday, Ramugondo, and Kathard's (2020) critical narrative perspective that merges case study and narrative inquiry. Guetterman and Fetters (2018) highlight the integration of mixed methods with case study designs, while Goertz (2017) and Mik Meyer (2020) emphasize multimethod qualitative approaches for causal depth and contextual richness. Head (2020) advances multicontextuality in narrative inquiry, situating stories within broader social realities, and Taber (2010) argues for incorporating multiple methodologies, including institutional ethnography, to enrich qualitative inquiry. These insights guided the layered design, ensuring that U Rock was examined as both program and lived practice embedded in institutional, cultural, and personal contexts.

Participants were purposively selected to reflect the collaborative nature of the program. Student from AB English Language, Philosophy, and Psychology implemented literacy, catechism, and wellness activities, while faculty mentors ensured supervision and rigor. At the center were youth in conflict with the law, residents of Bahay Pag asa Iligan, whose experiences formed the heart of the inquiry. Bahay Pag asa personnel like the social workers, custodians, and administrators, they all provided institutional context. In total, thirty participants embodied the interdisciplinary character of U-Rock during AY 2025–2026.

Participants	No.
Faculty	5
Students	10
Youth participants	5
Parents	5
Bahay Pag-asa personnel	5
Total	**30**

Data collection employed semi-structured interviews with faculty and personnel, focus group discussions with students, staff, and parents, narrative inquiry documenting youth life stories, ethnographic participant observation during sessions, and document analysis of reports and journals. Each method aligned with theoretical lenses: interviews and FGDs with critical pedagogy's emphasis on dialogue, narrative inquiry with restorative education's focus on reconciliation, and ethnography with psychosocial wellness theories highlighting identity and group dynamics.

Analysis proceeded through thematic coding across interviews, FGDs, and narratives to identify recurring patterns, narrative analysis to trace trajectories of change among youth, and ethnographic thick description to situate practices within the socio-cultural context of Brgy. Santiago, Iligan City. Triangulation across sources strengthened validity, while reflexivity through researcher journals

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accounted for positionality and bias. Trustworthiness was reinforced through member checking, triangulation, and reflexive journaling. Ethical protocols prioritized dignity and safety, adhering to institutional standards.

Finally, the scope and delimitation of the study must also be acknowledged. The research focuses specifically on U-Rock as implemented by SMCII's College of Arts and Sciences in partnership with Bahay Pag-asa in Iligan City. It does not generalize to all HEI extension programs or juvenile rehabilitation centers in the Philippines. Instead, it offers an in-depth exploration of one initiative, highlighting its interdisciplinary character and restorative orientation. By situating U Rock within its local context, the study provides insights that may inform broader discussions on pedagogy, extension, and rehabilitation.

V. Findings

The findings of this study are organized around the five qualitative research questions, each of which is summarily answered through the evidence gathered from participants, observations, and documents. Together, they provide a coherent picture of how U-Rock functions as a restorative extension program of St. Michael's College of Iligan.

In response to Research Question 1: When we asked how SMCII, through its College of Arts and Sciences, carries out CHED's mandate for community extension in partnership with Bahay Pag-asa, the answer emerged not in abstract policy but in the voices of those involved. Faculty spoke of designing U-Rock sessions with objectives and assessments, "*just like our classroom courses*," while students described teaching literacy inside Bahay Pag-asa as part of their coursework rather than mere volunteer work. Their words show how extension was reframed into pedagogy, woven directly into the curriculum.

This framing came alive in the everyday encounters at Bahay Pag-asa. Youth participants, seated in modest rooms and guided by student facilitators, shared how literacy and catechism touched their lives. One reflected, *"Sa klase sa pagbasa, nakakat-on ko nga isulat ang akong kaugalingong istorya"* ("In literacy class, I learned to write my own story"), while another admitted, *"Ang katesismo nakapahinumdom nga mahimo pa ko nga magbag-o"* ("The catechism reminded me I can still change"). Their testimonies reveal that these sessions were not charity but genuine learning experiences.

Parents noticed the difference too. During visits, they remarked that their children spoke about lessons "*like real/informal schooling inside Bahay Pag-asa*," and personnel confirmed that the youth *took the activities seriously*. These perspectives converge, reinforcing that community extension was not an add-on but a structured, pedagogical practice.

Collectively, these voices show how U-Rock integrates extension into meaningful sessions aligned with CHED's outcomes-based framework, enacting extension as restorative pedagogy. Shkedi (2005) reminds us that multiple case narratives weave diverse stories into a coherent whole, and this study reflects that in integration, it brings together institutional mandates, student facilitation, and youth agency. Likewise, Sonday, Ramugondo, and Kathard (2020) emphasize that merging case study and narrative inquiry illuminates both structures and personal trajectories, a methodological insight confirmed here as organizational frameworks and lived experiences converge. In this way, based on researcher's notes, activity documentations, narrative analysis, ethnographic description, triangulation, the CAS community extension achieves depth not only through structured activities but through the collective narration of faculty, students, youth, parents, and personnel. It can be deduced that, there and then, the institutional goals and personal stories reinforce one another.

Addressing Research Question 2: *What literacy, catechism, and wellness strategies are specifically implemented by U-Rock under the leadership of BA English Language, Philosophy, and Psychology programs?* The findings reveal a set of strategies that work together. Faculty mentors explained that literacy sessions were "*structured to build functional reading and writing, not just drills*," and students confirmed this intent. One BA English Language facilitator reflected, *"Sa pagbasa ug pagsulat, among gi-focus ang praktikal nga paggamit"* ("In reading and writing, we focus on practical use"). These voices show that

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literacy was designed not as rote exercise but as empowerment, giving youth skills they could carry beyond Bahay Pag-asa.

From literacy, the flow of U-Rock activities naturally moved into catechism, where values formation and moral reflection were emphasized. A Philosophy student described guiding discussions on *"respeto ug responsibilidad"* ("respect and responsibility"), and youth participants echoed the impact: *"Ang katesismo nakatabang nga makasabot ko sa akong sala ug sa posibilidad sa pagbag-o"* ("Catechism helped me understand my mistakes and the possibility of change"). Parents reinforced this perception, noting that their children spoke of *"pagtuon sa mga bili"* ("learning values"), which made catechism sessions feel like moral education rather than mere religious instruction. In this way, the moral dimension of rehabilitation was experienced as genuine dialogue, not imposed doctrine.

The third strand, wellness, was led by BS Psychology students who facilitated group activities focused on psychosocial resilience. One facilitator explained, "*We use activities to help them express feelings and build self-confidence*," while Bahay Pag-asa personnel observed, *"Makita namo nga ang wellness sessions nagtabang sa batan-on nga makabati og kalig-on"* ("We see that wellness sessions help the youth feel stronger"). Youth participants themselves testified, *"Sa wellness, nakat-on ko nga dili ko nag-inusara"* ("In wellness, I learned I am not alone"), underscoring the emotional depth of these interventions. Here, the emphasis was not only on coping but on rediscovering connection and belonging.

As a whole, literacy, catechism, and wellness responded to the cognitive, ethical, and emotional dimensions of rehabilitation. Data analysis shows that these strategies were not isolated but interconnected, forming a holistic approach that transformed extension into restorative pedagogy. Florida and Quinto (2015) remind us that quality indicators in higher education must extend beyond academic performance to include holistic student formation and global competitiveness. This insight highlights that U-Rock's integration of functional skills, values, and resilience not only advances rehabilitation but also aligns with institutional imperatives for quality and accountability in higher education. In this convergence, extension becomes more than service. It becomes a shared pedagogy of transformation.

Turning to Research Question 3: *In what ways does interdisciplinary collaboration among SMCII faculty and students shape the design and delivery of U-Rock's activities?* The findings highlight that collaboration across disciplines enriched both facilitators and participants. Faculty mentors explained that *"we ensure coherence and ethical rigor by supervising across disciplines, so literacy, catechism, and wellness are not fragmented but connected."* Their guidance provided the framework that allowed collaboration to take shape as a shared practice rather than separate contributions.

Within this framework, BA English Language students carried the responsibility of literacy support. One student facilitator reflected, *"Sa pagbasa ug pagsulat, among gi-focus ang praktikal nga paggamit"* ("In reading and writing, we focus on practical use"), showing how language instruction was grounded in everyday application. Philosophy students extended this work into values formation, leading discussions on *"respeto ug responsibilidad"* ("respect and responsibility"), while BS Psychology students addressed psychosocial needs, explaining, *"We design wellness activities that help them express feelings and build self-confidence."* These voices illustrate how each discipline brought its own expertise, yet together they created a seamless set of sessions.

The impact of this synergy was felt most strongly by youth participants in conflict with the law. One remarked, *"Nakakat-on ko sa pagbasa, nakasabot sa bili, ug nakabati nga dili ko nag-inusara"* ("I learned to read, understood values, and felt I am not alone"), capturing in one sentence the cognitive, ethical, and emotional dimensions of rehabilitation. Parents noticed similar changes, observing that their children spoke of classes that helped with "feelings and behavior," while Bahay Pag-asa personnel confirmed that *"ang interdisciplinary approach mas epektibo kaysa usa lang ka klase"* ("the interdisciplinary approach is more effective than a single type of session"). These perspectives converge, showing that collaboration was not only organizational but transformative in practice.

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Altogether, the voices of faculty, students, youth, parents, and personnel substantiate that interdisciplinary collaboration under faculty supervision created a holistic intervention: literacy built cognitive skills, catechism fostered ethical reflection, and wellness nurtured emotional resilience. Data analysis demonstrates that this synergy mobilized interdisciplinary pedagogy in extension work, offering a model that other HEIs may emulate. Aquino (2025) underscores that high-performing institutions in the Philippines succeed when instructional leadership frameworks are harmonized with quality-assured practices, and this indicates that U-Rock's interdisciplinary collaboration not only advances rehabilitation but also aligns with broader standards of institutional excellence and leadership in higher education.

In regards to Research Question 4—*How do youth participants at Bahay Pag-asa perceive the impact of U-Rock on their literacy development, values formation, and psychosocial resilience?* The findings affirm that the program was experienced as transformative. Their narratives consistently highlight increased confidence, reconnection with values, and improved coping mechanisms for trauma and stress, showing that education inside Bahay Pag-asa was not only instruction but rehabilitation.

Youth participants spoke of literacy sessions as moments of empowerment. One explained, *"Sa pagbasa ug pagsulat, nakat-on ko nga masulti ang akong kaugalingon"* ("In reading and writing, I learned to express myself"), while another added, *"Mas confident ko karon nga makigsulti sa uban"* ("I am more confident now to communicate with others"). These reflections reveal that literacy was not simply functional training but a way of reclaiming voice and agency even within custodial care.

From literacy, their accounts moved naturally into values formation through catechism. A youth participant remarked, *"Ang katesismo nakapahinumdom nga ang respeto ug pag-ampo importante sa akong kinabuhi"* ("Catechism reminded me that respect and prayer are important in my life"). Faculty and Philosophy students confirmed this impact, noting that guided reflection helped youth reconnect with community values. Parents reinforced the same perception during visits, observing that their children spoke of *"pagtuon sa mga bili"* ("learning values") as part of their change process. In this way, catechism was experienced not as ritual but as moral grounding.

Wellness activities, led by BS Psychology students, were described as spaces for healing. One youth participant shared, *"Sa wellness, nakat-on ko nga dili ko nag-inusara"* ("In wellness, I learned I am not alone"), while Bahay Pag-asa personnel reinforced this by stating, *"Makita namo nga ang mga batan-on mas kabalo na karon sa pag-cope sa stress ug trauma"* ("We see that the youth are now better at coping with stress and trauma"). Student facilitators observed that group activities built trust and resilience, allowing participants to process emotions collectively rather than in isolation.

Indeed, these voices substantiate that U-Rock is restorative in orientation: literacy builds confidence, catechism reconnects youth with values and community, and wellness strengthens coping mechanisms. Analysis of data confirms that education here functions as a pathway to reintegration and identity reconstruction, showing that pedagogy can serve as rehabilitation for youth in conflict with the law. To view it deeper, Abera (2023) underscores that education plays a central role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 10—Reduced Inequalities) by addressing social inequalities and fostering inclusion. This indicates that U-Rock's restorative orientation not only advances rehabilitation locally but also contributes to broader global commitments to equity and sustainable development.

Finally, in response to Research Question 5: *How does U-Rock contribute to SMCII's curricular innovation and institutional mission, particularly within the framework of restorative pedagogy and the QTIME SDG alignment?* The findings show that the program has become a vital expression of SMCII's mission. Faculty emphasized this integration, noting that *"U-Rock is not just outreach; it is part of our mission to transform lives through education."* Their supervision ensured that activities met PAASCU standards and ISO quality assurance while remaining responsive to local realities, grounding innovation in both accountability and compassion.

Students recognized that their participation was tied to institutional identity. An AB English Language facilitator reflected, *"Sa literacy, among gi-pakita nga ang extension program (U-Rock) kay tinuod nga pedagogy"* ("In literacy, we showed that extension is real pedagogy"), while a Philosophy

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student added, *"Our values formation sessions embody QTIME's call for discernment and compassion."* BS Psychology students reinforced this connection, explaining that *"wellness activities connect directly to SDG 3 on health and well-being."* These voices confirm that curricular innovation was enacted through interdisciplinary practice, where each discipline carried forward SMCII's mission in its own way.

Youth participants in conflict with the law testified to the restorative orientation of the program. One shared, *"Ang U-Rock nakatabang nga makabati ko nga kabahin gihapon ko sa komunidad"* ("U-Rock helped me feel I am still part of the community"), while another reflected, *"Nakat-on ko nga ang edukasyon makausab sa akong kinabuhi"* ("I learned that education can change my life"). Their narratives show that U-Rock was not experienced as charity but as a pathway to reintegration and identity reconstruction, where education became the means of reclaiming belonging.

Parents and Bahay Pag-asa personnel confirmed this institutional impact. A parent observed, *"Ang akong anak nakabati nga ang U-Rock kay murag eskwelahan, dili lang tabang"* ("My child feels that U-Rock is schooling, not just aid"), while a staff member added, *"Makita namo nga ang programa nagdala og maayo nga edukasyon sulod sa Bahay Pag-asa"* ("We see that the program brings quality education inside Bahay Pag-asa"). These affirmations show that U-Rock was perceived as authentic schooling, embedded within the institution's mission rather than peripheral assistance.

These voices, in their entirety, substantiate that U-Rock embodies SMCII's stand that education must transform lives, particularly those of marginalized youth. By aligning with QTIME, PAASCU, ISO, and UNESCO's SDGs, U-Rock demonstrates how extension can be both locally responsive and globally relevant, positioning SMCII as a model of curricular innovation rooted in restorative pedagogy.

As a whole, the findings address the five research questions by showing how U-Rock operationalizes CHED's mandate, implements holistic strategies, fosters interdisciplinary collaboration, impacts youth participants, and contributes to SMCII's institutional mission. Rather than presenting these as isolated achievements, the results illustrate how restorative pedagogy can be enacted through extension work that integrates literacy, values formation, and psychosocial support.

In terms of outcomes, the results demonstrate literacy gains among *Bahay Pag-asa* youth participants who participated in *U-Rock sessions*. Improved confidence in reading and writing was consistently reported, alongside greater ability to express themselves in dialogue. This growth was complemented by strengthened values orientation, as catechism sessions encouraged reflection on moral choices and community belonging. Wellness activities further supported psychosocial resilience, offering coping strategies for trauma and stress while group dynamics fostered solidarity. Together, these changes point toward reintegration prospects, as youth began to envision themselves not as offenders but as learners capable of contributing to society.

Building on these outcomes, the program also shaped the formation of student facilitators. Engagement with marginalized youth cultivated empathy and civic responsibility among BA English Language, Philosophy, and BS-Psychology students. Their direct involvement challenged preconceived notions and deepened their understanding of social justice. Applied learning was evident as theoretical knowledge from their disciplines was translated into practice like English students designing literacy modules, Philosophy students facilitating ethical dialogue, and Psychology students conducting wellness activities. Interdisciplinary collaboration enriched this process, teaching students to work across disciplinary boundaries and to value collective problem-solving. In this way, extension served not only the community but also the professional and ethical development of students.

Extending further, institutional outcomes reveal how U-Rock strengthened the partnership between SMCII and Bahay Pag-asa. Faculty mentors and administrators noted that the program enhanced the college's visibility as a socially engaged institution, while Bahay Pag-asa personnel emphasized the value of collaboration in sustaining rehabilitation efforts. Social workers and custodians observed that U Rock complemented their work by providing educational and psychosocial support that they could not deliver alone. This partnership underscores the role of

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higher education institutions in extending their mission beyond campus walls, affirming that institutional responsibility includes active participation in community rehabilitation.

Finally, these outcomes demonstrate the layered impact of U-Rock. Literacy gains, values orientation, and psychosocial resilience among youth are mirrored by empathy, civic responsibility, and applied learning among students, while institutional collaboration reinforces sustainability. The findings therefore suggest that U Rock functions not only as an extension initiative but as a restorative pedagogy that advances reintegration, student formation, and institutional mission within a coherent framework.

VI. Discussion

The insights from the five research questions converge into a coherent account of how U-Rock functions as restorative pedagogy within SMCII. The program operationalizes CHED's mandate for extension by embedding literacy, catechism, and wellness into a structured partnership with Bahay Pag-asa in Barangay Santiago, Iligan City. These strategies—functional literacy sessions, values-oriented catechism, and psychosocial wellness activities—are delivered through interdisciplinary collaboration among BA English Language, Philosophy, and BS-Psychology students under faculty mentorship. Youth participants affirm the program's impact on their literacy development, values orientation, and resilience, while its alignment with QTIME, PAASCU, ISO, and UNESCO's SDGs situates U-Rock within the college's broader mission of curricular innovation and social responsibility.

Placed against conventional extension models that often emphasize charity, livelihood, or skills training, U Rock distinguishes itself by reframing extension as education. This reframing reflects Guetterman and Fetters' (2018) observation that complex social practices require integrated designs, where case study and qualitative inquiry converge to capture layered realities. Similarly, Goertz (2017) underscores that causal mechanisms in case studies are best revealed through multimethod approaches, a principle evident in U Rock's integration of literacy, values formation, and psychosocial support.

The implications for higher education are significant. U Rock illustrates that extension can serve as rehabilitation, offering marginalized youth pathways to reintegration while also forming students in empathy, civic responsibility, and applied learning. This dual impact resonates with Mik-Meyer's (2020) emphasis on multimethod qualitative research as a way of grasping social realities in their full depth. It also reflects Head's (2020) notion of multicontextuality in narrative inquiry, where individual stories intersect with institutional and community contexts. In this sense, extension becomes a site where theory and practice converge to address exclusion and foster resilience.

Beyond its local context, U-Rock contributes to Global South curriculum discourse by demonstrating how institutions in peripheral settings can generate innovations that challenge dominant models. Rooted in Iligan City, the program shows that local practices (grounded in literacy, values, and psychosocial support) can inform global debates on pedagogy and social responsibility. This aligns with Taber's (2010) argument that institutional ethnography and narrative inquiry, when combined, reveal how local practices can produce knowledge that radiates outward. U-Rock thus affirms that Global South institutions are not passive recipients of educational frameworks but active producers of curricular innovations rooted in resilience and community engagement.

Overall, the findings confirm that U-Rock addresses the paper's objective and the five research questions firmly that distinguishes itself from conventional models. It advances restorative pedagogy in higher education and contributes to global curricular discourse. It stands as both a local intervention with meaningful statement on the transformative potential of education.

Thematic Analysis

From the findings, ten themes emerged that illustrate how U-Rock functions as a restorative extension program of St. Michael's College of Iligan. These themes are interconnected, and each is supported by theoretical and empirical insights from the literature.

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Theme 1: Extension as Pedagogy. U- Rock reframes extension from service to pedagogy, embedding literacy, catechism, and wellness into structured learning experiences. This resonates with Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which insists that education must move beyond charity to dialogical practice that restores dignity and agency.

Theme 2: Operationalizing CHED Mandates. The program demonstrates how CHED's outcomes-based framework is localized, showing compliance while innovating beyond conventional outreach. This aligns with CHED Memorandum Order No. 93 (2026), which emphasizes community extension as integral to the Healthy Learning Institution pathway, situating U Rock within national policy while adapting it to local realities.

Theme 3: Literacy as Empowerment. Youth participants gained confidence in reading, writing, and communication, using literacy as a tool to reclaim agency and envision reintegration. Literacy here functions as empowerment, echoing Salazar's (2020) findings that extension programs in Philippine colleges can transform marginalized learners when literacy is treated as a pathway to participation.

Theme 4: Values Formation and Moral Reflection. Catechism sessions fostered ethical awareness and community belonging, reinforcing restorative education's emphasis on reconciliation. Aguilar (2016) similarly found that instilling values in children in conflict with the law strengthens moral reflection and supports rehabilitation, underscoring the restorative dimension of U Rock's catechism activities.

Theme 5: Psychosocial Resilience. Wellness activities addressed trauma and stress, strengthening identity and group solidarity among marginalized youth. This reflects Ahearn's (2000) work on psychosocial wellness, which highlights coping strategies and resilience as central to recovery in vulnerable populations, and Hopkins' (2015) insights into restorative practice as a means of rebuilding trust and identity.

Theme 6: Interdisciplinary Collaboration. The synergy of BAEL, Philosophy, and Psychology students under faculty mentorship highlighted the necessity of interdisciplinary pedagogy in addressing complex social issues. Braßler (2020) emphasizes that interdisciplinary teaching fosters deeper learning and problem-solving, while Fernandes (2023) notes that extension programs thrive when disciplines collaborate to address unexpected challenges in practice.

Theme 7: Student Transformation. Facilitators themselves experienced growth in empathy, civic responsibility, and applied learning. This mirrors Freire's (1970) insistence that educators are also transformed through dialogical encounters, and Fernandes (2023) underscores how extension programs reshape students' professional identities by confronting them with real social contexts.

Theme 8: Institutional Partnership and Mission Alignment. Collaboration with Bahay Pag-asa personnel strengthened HEI–community ties, while alignment with QTIME, PAASCU, ISO, and UNESCO's SDGs situated U Rock within both local and global frameworks. Narine, Ali, and Hill (2021) argue that assessing community assets and needs is essential for effective extension planning, a principle evident in U Rock's partnership model.

Theme 9: Distinction from Conventional Models. Unlike charity or livelihood programs, U Rock integrates pedagogy into extension, distinguishing itself as a transformative model of restorative education. Hopkins (2015) stresses that restorative practice differs from service provision by centering dialogue, reconciliation, and empowerment—precisely the distinction U-Rock embodies.

Theme 10: Contribution to Global Curriculum Discourse. By situating extension within Iligan's local realities, U-Rock demonstrates how Global institutions can generate curricular innovations that challenge dominant models. This contribution affirms Freire's (1970) call for peripheral contexts to produce knowledge that radiates outward, offering alternative frameworks rooted in resilience and community engagement.

When synthesized, the thematic analysis shows that U-Rock is not simply a set of activities but a coherent framework where pedagogy, policy, empowerment, resilience, collaboration, and institutional mission intersect. The ten themes stand as distinct contributions, each highlighting a

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particular dimension of restorative extension, while the scholarship on pedagogy, restorative practice, psychosocial wellness, interdisciplinary teaching, and extension planning provides a foundation that strengthens and validates these insights. Together, they demonstrate that the program advances restorative pedagogy in ways that address local rehabilitation needs and enrich curricular discourse.

Here, the ten themes that emerged from the study are also interpreted not only through participants' voices and institutional evidence but also aligned with established theoretical lenses:

Theme	**Discussion**
Extension as Pedagogy	U-Rock reframes extension into structured pedagogy. Freire (1970) emphasizes education as liberation, showing how extension becomes dialogical practice that empowers marginalized youth.
Operationalizing CHED Mandates	The partnership with Bahay Pag-asa enacts CHED's extension mandate. Mik-Meyer (2020) stresses theoretical positioning, while Hopkins (2015) highlights restorative practice as policy in action, making mandates transformative rather than procedural.
Literacy as Empowerment	Literacy gains triangulated across youth voices, facilitator notes, and records show empowerment. Taber (2010) stresses saliency, while Freire (1970) frames literacy as critical consciousness, enabling youth to read both "the word and the world."
Values Formation and Moral Reflection	Values formation is evident in catechism transcripts, student reflections, and faculty accounts. Sonday, Ramugondo & Kathard (2020) highlight contextual layering, while Hopkins (2015) shows restorative values as central to moral reflection and community repair.
Psychosocial Resilience	Youth narratives, activity logs, and institutional reports highlight resilience. Ahearn (2000) defines psychosocial wellness as coping and adaptation in contexts of displacement, aligning with how U-Rock fosters resilience among youth in conflict with the law.
Interdisciplinary Collaboration	Faculty interviews, student narratives, and activity documentation show integration across disciplines. Braßler (2020) demonstrates that interdisciplinary teaching enhances problem-solving and innovation, validating U-Rock's collaborative design.
Student Transformation	Student facilitators reported empathy and civic responsibility, corroborated by faculty and activity records. Shkedi (2005) frames transformation as explanatory, while Freire (1970) situates it as praxis—reflection and action that change both students and society.
Institutional Partnership and Mission Alignment	Collaboration between SMCII and Bahay Pag-asa aligns extension with mission. Sonday et al. (2020) highlight structure and agency, while Hopkins (2015) shows restorative partnerships as sustaining institutional and community healing.

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Theme	Discussion
Distinction from Conventional Models	Unlike charity-based outreach, U-Rock demonstrates restorative pedagogy. Mik-Meyer (2020) insists themes be theoretically anchored, while Freire (1970) critiques "banking education," positioning U-Rock as dialogical and transformative.
Contribution to Global Curriculum Discourse	By situating U-Rock within critical pedagogy, restorative education, and SDGs, the study contributes to global curriculum debates. Shkedi (2005) and Taber (2010) affirm themes must connect beyond local recurrence, while Braßler (2020) shows interdisciplinary innovation as globally relevant.

These theme demonstrate the layered impact of U-Rock. Literacy, catechism/values orientation, and psychosocial resilience among youth are mirrored by empathy, civic responsibility, and applied learning among students, while institutional collaboration reinforces sustainability. The findings therefore suggest that U-Rock functions not only as an extension initiative but as a restorative pedagogy that advances reintegration, student formation, and institutional mission within a coherent framework.

In relation to the five guiding questions, other salient findings relatively emerged. First, SMCII operationalized CHED's extension mandate through its partnership with Bahay Pag-asa, embedding service within the College of Arts and Sciences and aligning outreach with institutional mission. This was confirmed by CHED memoranda, faculty interviews, and the documented conduct of U-Rock sessions, each pointing to the same institutional commitment. Second, literacy activities, catechism sessions, and psychosocial wellness activities were concretely implemented under the direction of college of Arts and Sciences. Student reflections described discipline-specific contributions, while program guidelines and activity records corroborated their systematic delivery. Third, interdisciplinary collaboration among faculty and students shaped the design and delivery of activities; faculty interviews emphasized integration across language, values, and psychological support, while student narratives and activity documentation reinforced this holistic approach. Fourth, parents, Bahay Pag-asa staff, and youth participants perceived U-Rock as impactful in strengthening literacy, instilling responsibility and values, and fostering resilience. These perceptions were echoed in the researcher's field notes notes and institutional reports, which recorded similar outcomes, showing consistency across participant and institutional perspectives. Fifth, U-Rock contributed to curricular innovation by modeling restorative pedagogy within the QTIME framework and advancing SDG-aligned outcomes. Researcher's journal noted moments where institutional priorities could overshadow participant voices, and these entries were revisited during coding to temper interpretations, ensuring that claims about innovation remained cautious and attentive to interpretive limits.

VII. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, U-Rock demonstrates that extension can be reframed as pedagogy by integrating literacy, values formation, and psychosocial wellness into a coherent program that transforms marginalized youth while also shaping student facilitators in empathy, civic responsibility, and applied learning. Its interdisciplinary design and restorative orientation show that extension is not peripheral service but a structured educational practice that advances institutional mission and community rehabilitation. Using interviews, focus groups, narratives, actual U-Rock activities, and document analysis, literacy gains reported by youth were confirmed in facilitator records, values formation described in student reflections was echoed in catechism transcripts and faculty accounts, and resilience observed in activities was corroborated by institutional reports, while researcher journals were used to check how institutional priorities might influence interpretation and

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to keep youth voices foregrounded. In this way, the voices of students, faculty, parents, Bahay Pag-asa personnel, and youth residents were cross-checked and critically interpreted, and the study shows how the problem, "*Transforming Lives: U-Rock's Restorative Pedagogy with Youth in Conflict with the Law*", is addressed through evidence of literacy development, catechism/values orientation, psychosocial wellness, and restorative educational practice.

Recommendations

As deduced in the findings, extension programs thrive when they move beyond service delivery and become transformative spaces for learning, collaboration, and rehabilitation. U-Rock demonstrates this potential, and its lessons can guide both institutions and policymakers in shaping sustainable, restorative practices. That being said, the paper made the following recommendations:

1. **Policy.** CHED may refine its extension guidelines to explicitly promote restorative pedagogy and interdisciplinary collaboration, consistent with its mandate to strengthen community engagement. Local Government Units should deepen partnerships with HEIs by providing logistical and financial support to sustain initiatives like U-Rock.
2. **Institutional.** Higher Education Institutions are encouraged to replicate U-Rock's model by adapting it to their own contexts. Programs should integrate literacy, values formation, and psychosocial wellness into extension work so that extension is reframed as pedagogy that restores dignity and empowers marginalized youth.
3. **Curricular.** For sustainability, U-Rock should be embedded into curricular structures as part of experiential learning requirements. Faculty mentorship and institutional backing must ensure quality, ethical practice, and long-term impact.
4. **Scaling.** U-Rock can establish a research and documentation hub to track outcomes and refine restorative pedagogy, develop policy briefs and training modules to guide adoption by other HEIs and LGUs, and build a network of partner institutions to enrich curriculum discourse through shared practices. Positioning U-Rock as a flagship identity within SMCII will embed it firmly into the college's mission and reputation, ensuring continuity and visibility as a model of restorative extension.

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